

**DPS****Montgomery County
Department of Permitting Services**

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Signing Plans When Submitting Electronically

Design Professional's Electronic Seal and Signature

The Maryland Boards of Architects, Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors allow the use of digital signatures by design professionals. DPS accepts digital signatures of the design professionals who prepared or approved the design plans and other documents. If the design professional does not digitally signed the documents, DPS requires each plan to be electronically sealed and the design professional must upload (into the Documents folder of ePlans) the appropriate affidavit corresponding to each processing stage on firm's official letterhead. The affidavits may be found in the [Project Dox User's Guide](#). *As of January 3, 2017, DPS will accept only digital signatures.*

How can I obtain a digital signature?

Digital signatures can be obtained through third-party entities known as certificate authorities, who usually charge a fee for the service of independently verifying the identity of the signer and issuing the digital certificate. Certificate authorities use a type of technology known as Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) to create, manage, store and distribute digital signatures. PKI technology provides the same level of security as a traditional wet signature because the digital signature cannot be copied or altered in any way. The document's authenticity is verifiable through checking the digital signature's certificate in a standard PDF viewer, and if the document has been altered since being signed, the certificate will display an "X" or a warning sign in it.